



## **BOSTON HARBOR ISLAND ALLIANCE BACKGROUND**

Boston Harbor Island Alliance's mission is to promote the use, enjoyment, and awareness of the Boston Harbor Islands national park area by creating vibrant public spaces, facilities, and programming on the islands, raising and managing the public and private resources necessary to do so.

As a member of the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership, BHIA serves as a steward of the 34 islands, three National Historic Landmarks, military fortifications, bird sanctuaries, summer retreats, youth service facilities, recreational areas and campsites that comprise the park. The number of islands, their proximity to a major metropolitan area, and their significant natural and cultural features create a resource that has no parallel in the United States.

Founded in 1994, BHIA is one of the very few non-profit organizations designated by Congress as a partner in the development and programming of a park. With an operating budget of around \$2 million BHIA staff work side-by-side with National Park Service employees dedicated to the Boston Harbor Islands. In partnership with the National Park Service and Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, BHIA plays a vital role in creating an enhanced visitor experience by bringing awareness and building visitation to the Park. BHIA welcomes over 150,000 visitors from around the world to the islands each season.

The Boston Harbor Islands' open space offers a respite to anyone who lives, works, and plays in our urban setting, allowing them to connect with the natural world just minutes from downtown Boston. Bringing better facilities and more activity to the islands gives everyone who visits them a stake in the park's future -- the surest way to safeguard the islands' protection and the quality of the harbor for future generations. Through partnerships with corporations, foundations, individuals and government agencies Boston Harbor Island Alliance provides 130 free informative and educational island programs, as well as free ferry access to the islands for underserved communities.

A partner boat transportation company, Boston Best Cruises, provides public ferry service to the park's two hub islands, Georges and Spectacle, from Boston and Quincy. Two high-speed ferries allow 200 passengers per trip to travel comfortably and quickly from Long Wharf in downtown Boston. Vessels depart every 30 minutes during peak season weekends, and every hour on weekdays and the shoulder season. An inter-island shuttle connects Georges and Spectacle Island with Lovells, Grape, and Bumpkin Islands. The improved water transportation both to and between the Boston Harbor Islands has helped increase overall visitation to the park.

In June 2011, Boston Harbor Island Alliance will open Harbor Islands Pavilion on the Rose Kennedy Greenway that will serve as visitors' center and ticket office. Strategically located opposite the public ferry dock to the islands and near major public transit stations, the Pavilion will serve as the main downtown gateway to the Boston Harbor Islands. The project includes lighting, exhibits, seating, two securable structures, a 4,000 square foot solar roof canopy, paving and landscape improvements on a site of approximately 28,000 square feet.

For more information on BHIA, visit [islandalliance.org](http://islandalliance.org).

For more information on the Boston Harbor Island national park area, visit [bostonharborislands.org](http://bostonharborislands.org).